

# Solano County Juvenile Hall Inspection

## 2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

### I. Reason for Investigation

In accordance with California State Penal Code §919 (b) the Grand Jury is required to inspect all County detention facilities.

### II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Visited Solano County Juvenile Hall
- Interviewed Juvenile Hall staff

### III. Background

1. After being arrested or detained, juveniles (Wards) are admitted to Juvenile Hall in Fairfield. They are examined by medical staff before acceptance. After processing through the automated fingerprint system (LiveScan), they are held at the facility no longer than 72 hours awaiting a court appearance. While being held at the facility, they are given additional examinations for their physical and mental health prior to their court appearance. The County spends an average of \$102 per day for each Ward. An average of 16 juveniles are transported by van from Juvenile Hall to court each court day. After court, they are brought back to Juvenile Hall where they are either released to a parent/guardian or detained. Sixty-five to seventy percent of the juveniles are released after their court appearance.

2. The staff advised that the most critical issue is transporting juveniles to court. Transportation is the responsibility of the Probation Department which operates Juvenile Hall. Some juveniles have escaped during transportation to-and-from court. Initially, Juvenile Court was held at the Juvenile Hall facility. This was later changed and Juvenile Court is now held at the Superior Court building.

3. A new Juvenile Hall, now under construction, is scheduled for completion in 2004, which will add modern cells and classrooms, better visitation facilities and a larger library. A Juvenile Court will be at the facility which will eliminate transporting the juveniles. Juvenile Hall staff will monitor the progress of the new facility.

4. Juvenile Hall is an old facility, but in good condition and is very clean. Some cells have an extra solid plastic bunk to provide for overcrowding. These bunks were not in use when the Grand Jury toured the facility. Two cells were used for storage.

5. The Grand Jury visited the mess hall during lunch. All food is examined and prepared under the supervision of a dietician.

6. The Grand Jury toured the facility and viewed several classrooms in session. They appeared in order and the Wards were well behaved. Some Wards were using computers. The Wards are placed in classes at the same learning level as prior to their detention. A craft course is offered and the Wards are allowed to sell their products to earn extra funds. The physical education area was well monitored. Religious services for all faiths are conducted at least twice a week. After services, a one-on-one dialogue is encouraged with a religious leader. The staff takes the Wards on tours outside the facility for business needs and recreational activities.

#### IV. Findings and Recommendations

*Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number*

**Finding #1** - The Solano County Juvenile Hall is in good condition. (4)

**Recommendation #1** - No recommendation is needed.

**Finding #2**- Transporting juveniles to Juvenile Court is a critical issue. (2)

**Recommendation #2** - Hold court at the Juvenile Hall facility. If this is not feasible, the Sheriff's Office be responsible for transportation until the new facility is completed.

#### Affected Agencies

- Solano County Probation Department
  - Solano County Juvenile Hall
  - Solano County Sheriff's Office
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